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to his "Stationery" business, & the publisher found out
that he was a man of 'push' & 'intelligence', & sent him
the best new books 'on sale or return'. The coming
of new books was hailed with delight in the
living back parlours, & the delighted skimming of
the new pages was a continual stimulus to
the intellectual life of the two, & they were kept in
touch with the thought of the day.
Not only so; but Ellen knew that reading is not
thinking, & in one of the passages that John had marked
in Ellen's book that it was well for her to do a little
steady thinking (not dreaming) every day, & to
write her thoughts: so while her fingers were busy
with the delicate stitching which the initiated will
understand, was about just then, her mind
occupied itself definitely with the thoughts the
book she had in hand called up. & with some
thought about the bringing up of a child, & took
her not ten minutes to jot down what she had
thought. John liked to see her note-book, & their
jottings led to many delightful talks. They were
not dull by any means, those people of the little
Stationers' Shop, & their talk, if you will believe it,
was as good & as brilliant, ^{as} as you might hear
in that famous London Club which exists "to
promote conversation." When love sharpens the
wit & gives & courtly oil the tongue, great
commonplace people drop pearls & diamonds in their

their talk! And then the delicious little ¹⁰ ~~pleasure~~
Butter than Pamela! a great deal, but not to be wondered.
stood outside those iron walls.

How duties thricken upon one - what a delightfully
elastic thing a day is! The more you have to do the
more you can do, & the less you have to do, the less
time you have to do it in. Those bits that Forster
marked for his reading certainly did put his
wife in despair now & then. Think of this -
three hours in the green air every day, in
possible weather - for a busy, housewife living
in a town! She did it though. A little extra
diligence, began her earlier out of bed, &
she was able to manage an hour & a half in
the park in the forenoon, & as long in the afternoon,
walking ^{where she would walk,} while she could, & then, taking the 'bus',
then passed the door. She was repaid for the
effort; the delicious fresh air touched her cheek,
stirred her blood, purged & vivified her weary
thoughts. The song of the birds, the swish of
the leaves, the hum of the grass, got into
her being. She watched the little children play,
& thought - her thoughts: there were always little
bits of sewing which she could do as she sat - without
attracting observation.

One sentence marked by her husband had struck
Eden especially: it was to the effect - that the life of
a woman as she was must needs be a life of
consecration. She is left apart - ~~separated~~ - ^{from} ~~from~~ ^{many}

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many things in her heart. Concentration in our case
was easy; never before had the Psalm & Songbooks
been so precious; she could have read all day long
in her Bible, that book of family histories. All day
she went about singing & making melody in
her heart & in psalms & hymns & spiritual songs.
Never before had there been so much that she needed
to say to her Father as now that she, too, was
looking forward to the honor & joy of parenthood, the
crowning perfection of human nature, whereby it
becomes, in just one respect, perfect - as the
Father in heaven is perfect!

But concentration meant, she knew, more than
this: did it not include such diligence in
keeping the door of her heart - as she had never
practised before? Her very love for her husband,
the very ease & sweetness of her life, did they
not tempt her to 'let herself out' in a thousand ways,
which it was shame & pity to remember? She
kept not a journal, but a private 'conscience book' -
sentences like these were too frequent for her peace: -

Jan. 13th The part of the big thick pudding I made was, somehow,
drying. John said nothing, but he did not enjoy his dinner,
& I was as cross as two sticks! I could feel the
cloud coming over my face. John talked & cheerily
humored me as I sat inside because he would not
eat his dinner, when yesterday's stew had turned me
green!

Jan. 16th John's sister Fanny came over, & she asked me
a lot of questions about when we got everything out of the
loom, but I got on my high horse, & showed like a self-
queen - What a darling she must think me! And how they

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the worst of it was, she could trace her feeling to feel
in with them to a certain brotherliness in herself.
The fact was, they looked down on John then as the poor
fool of the family. 'Poor John, he'd never be' been a
provisioner of fatherhood ~~that~~ lived. You see it took
mother a bit o' time to turn herself round, ~~and~~
provisioner - job just offered. It's been in John's way,
poor chap. He might be' done better for himself."

How excellent people of this stamp look upon
an idea as that it really is, a possession, a
thing to stick to, + a thing you can't - air too often.
So there was seldom a family meeting but this form
of words was gone through. And Ellen winced: why
could they not see that her husband's little finger
was worth their whole bodies? And why would
they measure her by their standard of fault from
ideal Christian coats? When she married, she had been
quite prepared to be very generous to John's people. She
did not put it to herself, but she had meant to
patronise them very sweetly, & they were to find out
at last that - a charming thing it was to have
a lady in the family. But here were the tables
turned with a vengeance! She knew she was
only a 'poor little soul' in their eyes, & to be
patronised where you had meant to ~~condescend~~
is just one of the things a woman finds trying.

But now, in the light of the consecrated life
which she saw to be her bounden duty & service - for
who could tell how many hearts & influences in her might
disfigure her little child - the thing began her way to
love

of the discovery she had made of her own selfishness & hardness. He had been a deal ~~too~~ happy this last year, & said, shall forget them other people. They talked over the matter for into the night & came to a few practical conclusions. One was, that they would have an evening every week for any young ladies - in shops or other lonely young women whom they could get to know. They could sit down much for them perhaps, but - a kindly welcome - a cup of coffee would be cheering, & talk would take care of itself. Then, there were the poor families they knew of where it was very up-hill work to keep alive. There was a journeyman book-binder who helped whenever a book-binding job came in but seemed to have no work between whiles. How in the world did he support a sickly wife & poor children? Then, there was poor Mrs. Green who did their washing, with her little penniless & nearly the husband. & Lin's people - Lin was the errand boy. Truly there is no lack of introduction for any one who wants to make friends with the poor.

Ellen went to sleep with an easier heart. She had found again the middle ground & thought for many poor families, & without mistaking of it, she missed this point of her life. Perhaps no life can be quite happy that is not in touch with the very poor. What had made her miserable was the fear that her little child should come into the world with the poverty

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a hard, selfish heart. But - before marriage, ^{before} ~~with~~ the purposes of love & kindness that it means to carry out.

Truly, a little child shall lead them. Before her marriage, Ellen Bridger ~~had been~~ ^{was} a nice girl enough but - just a little commonplace; but now, the mere foreshadowing of the presence of a little child had given her a breadth of thought, a refinement & tenderness of feeling which made her a woman of very different calibre to any the promise of her girlhood contained.

Her father noticed the change:

"I declare Ellen improves every day! & in a way you wouldn't expect. Instead of becoming commonplace she has married a small tradesman, & estimates me as being more of a lady now than in her."
